

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EWWT, ETRD, EAGR, ETRN, BGEN, NI

SUBJECT: DELAYED EXPORTS OF NIGERUAN COCOA

REF: STATE 228199

1. EXPORT SITUATION ON LAGOS DOCKS BAD. NIGERIAN PORTS AUTHORITY (NPA) CONCENTRATING ON FACILITATION OF IMPORTS BECAUSE DEMURRAGE ON WAITING SHIPS NOW BELIEVED TO EXCEED ONE MILLION DOLLARS PER DAY. TOP PRIORITY IS UNLOADING OF CEMENT. AS VESSELS USING PRIORITY BERTHS PROHIBITED FROM EXCEEDING RIGID TIME ALLOTMENTS, (AMERICAN WEST AFRICA CONFERENCE SHIPS ALLOWED /MAXIMUM 6 DAYS), UTILIZE BERTHING PERIOD TO UNLOAD WITH LITTLE OR NO TIME TO LOAD CARGO.

2. ONCOMING NEW COCOA CROP HAS FORCED SOME EXPORT ACTION AFTER TWO MONTHS OF IMPASSE. THREE SHIPS CURRENTLY LOADING COCOA FOR EUROPE. CHARTERED 10,000 TON "FALCON FRIENDSHIP" LEFT WITH COCOA CARGO FOR PHILADELPHIA SEPT 18. CONTINUED EFFORT WILL BE MADE TO MOVE COCOA BUT ON UNSCHEDULED, UNPREDICTABLE BASIS.

3. NO FIRM GOVERNMENT PLAN TO CORRECT SITUATION APPARENT ALTHOUGH THERE HAS BEEN TALK DURING LAST 3 MONTHS ABOUT TRANSFERRING COCOA EXPORTS TO RIVER PORTS.

4. EMBASSY OFFICERS WILL CALL ON MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND NPA TO EMPHASIZE IMPORTANCE TO NIGERIA OF MAINTAINING FLOW OF COCOA TO TRADITIONAL US MARKET. WE WILL REPORT NEW DEVELOPMENTS.

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5. LATEST STEP TO RELIEVE GENERAL PORT CONGESTION IS SEPT 26
APPOINTMENT OF 4-MAN TRIBUNAL TO PROBE WHY SO MUCH CEMENT
ORDERED BY FORMER REGIME AND TO NEGOTIATE RESCHEDULING OF
DELIVERIES OVER 2-3 YEAR PERIOD. BETWEEN MAY 1974 AND JUNE
1975, 20 MILLION METRIC TONS (16 MILLION DESIGNATED FOR
MINISTRY OF DEFENSE) WERE ORDERED FOR DELIVERY IN 12-MONTH
PERIOD, NECESSITATING UNLOADING OF 150 CEMENT SHIPS PER
MONTH ON THE AVERAGE. FMG HAS STRESSED THAT UNLESS THIS
SCHEDULE DRASTICALLY CHANGED "PORT CONGESTION WOULD BECOME
A PERMANENT FEATURE OF OUR NATIONAL LIFE."
AIM IS TO SPREAD DELIVERIES OVER NEXT 3 YEARS. RESALE OF FUTURE SHIP-
MENTS TO THIRD COUNTRIES IS ALSO POSSIBLE.
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